

SAMPLE FINAL PROJECT HANDOUT

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Name of Topic: Creatively Grouping Your Students

Relationship of topic to classroom management topic in *Effective Teaching*

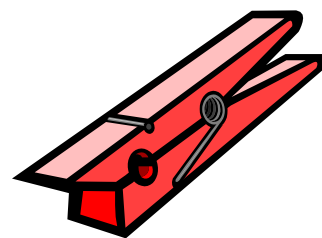
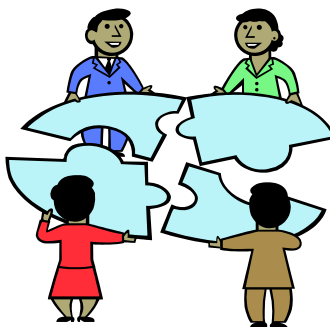
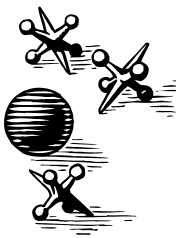
Methods:

As an effective teacher, you want to create a positive classroom climate. A positive learning environment is one in which the interactions between you and your students and/or your students with each other are pleasant. The learning environment is influenced by the room configuration, your teaching style, the warmth and encouragement that you demonstrate, your modeling of a competitive or cooperative relationship with others, and your establishment and enforcement of learning communities among your students.

Grouping strategies are related to classroom management in that they tend to contribute to a positive learning environment. Creative grouping procedures can add humor, variety, and a mode by which students can channel their energy. The grouping strategies below add a sense of excitement and fun to your class. In addition, they give the students an opportunity to move around and expend some energy in a constructive manner. They also can positively enhance the interactions between you and your students as well as between your students and their peers. As such, the strategy demonstrated within this presentation contributes to the social environment, or "the interaction patterns you promote in the classroom" (p. 167 of textbook).

List of materials:

color squares or index cards
index cards with well-known songs
index cards with different actions
puzzles having only 4-5 pieces
different objects – 5 cars, 5 jacks, etc.
index cards with concepts
clothespins of different colors



Directions:

Instead of grouping your students the same old way over and over again, add some novelty to your grouping techniques and keep your students laughing and guessing as to what you will do next! Each strategy takes only minutes to implement. Once the students are grouped, they are then assigned the actual group task to complete. Below are some ways that you can creatively group your students and add some levity to your classroom:

1. **By Color Squares or Index Cards**

The number of different colors should equal the number of desired groups. For example, if you want five groups, cut sheets of five different colors into squares (or you can use index cards). Divide the number of students by the number of desired groups to determine the number of times a color has to be replicated. Then randomly distribute the squares to the students, instructing the "blue" students to work together, the "red" students to work together, etc.



2. **By Songs**
The number of different songs should equal the number of desired groups. For example, if you want six groups, select six different songs with which you are relatively certain the students are familiar. Then write the titles of these songs on index cards, one title per card. Divide the number of students by the number of desired groups to determine the number a song title has to be replicated. Randomly distribute the cards to the students, telling them that they're to softly hum the tune of the song on the index card and find another student who is humming the same tune. All students humming the same tune become a group.
3. **By Numbers**
Out loud count off all students 1-2-3-4-5 (the number to which you count depends on how many groups you want to have; counting up to five will give you five groups). All 1's work together, all 2's work together, etc.
4. **By First Name**
Have the students line up by first name. Depending upon the number of students you want per group, section off the students once the line is formed. For example, the first five students will work together. The second five students will work together, etc. This is a great ice breaker.
5. **By Birthday**
Have the students line up by their birthday. This is another good ice breaker. Section off the students once the line is formed. For example, the first four students work together. The second four students work together, etc.
6. **By Action**
The number of actions should equal the number of desired groups. On index cards, write an action (e.g., clapping hands, patting one's head, hopping on one foot, etc.). Write one action per index card. Then distribute the cards randomly to the students, instructing them to perform the action on the card and to find another student performing the same action. All students doing the same action will work together.
8. **By Puzzle Piece**
Puzzles with only 4-5 pieces can be purchased very inexpensively at discount stores such as K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and Target. Using these puzzles (the number of pieces/puzzle is equal to the desired number of group members), mix up all of the pieces from all of the puzzles. Randomly distribute the pieces to the students, instructing them to find other students having pieces belonging to the same puzzle. Once they have found each other, they are to complete the puzzle to verify their group placement. All students completing the same puzzle will work together.
9. **By Object**
Obtain a number of small objects, making sure that you have some duplicates. The number of different objects will equal the number of desired groups. Place the objects in a container near the classroom entrance and instruct students to select an object as they enter the class and take it to their seat for the class period. When it is time for group work, students with the same object will work together.
10. **By Similarity of Concept**

As a wonderful review of course terminology, concepts, etc., write vocabulary/traits/principles reflective of particular concepts on index cards. Write one term/trait/principle per index card. The number of different concepts will equal the number of desired groups. Randomly distribute the index cards to the students, instructing them to find other students having conceptually similar terms. Students with conceptually similar terms will work together. This grouping strategy also encourages upper-level thinking.

11. **By Clothespin Color**

Buy a package of multicolored clothespins. The number of different colors will equal the number of desired groups. Place clothespins in a container near the classroom entrance and instruct students to select a clothespin as they enter the classroom and take it to their desk for the class period. When it is time for group work, students with the same color clothespin will work together.